

Message Text

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SUBJECT: NORTHERN DISSIDENCE

REF: SANA 2807

SUMMARY: PORTENTS FOR SERIOUS MILITARY CLASHES BETWEEN YAR ARMY AND TRIBAL FORCES SEEM TO HAVE FADED FOR THE MOMENT. EASING OF TENSION FOLLOWS DETERMINED AND SUCCESSFUL YAR EFFORT TO PUSH MILITARY CONVOY UP ROAD FROM SANA TO SA'ADA, FURING DOWN TRIBAL LEADERS IN THE AREA. THIS MILITARY MOVE, PLUS WORDS OF CAUTION AND SUPPORT FROM US AND SAUDI SIDES, HAVE LED AL-HAMDI TO MAKE POLITVFCAL GESTURES TO TRIBAL LEADERS. END SUMMAR.

1. FOLLOWING USE OF AIRCRAFT LAST WEEK AGAINST TRIBAL POSITIONS IN THE NORTH, YARG MOUNTED FAIRLY LARGE EXPEDITIONARY FORCE-- PERHAPS A BATTALION--AND MOVED UP THE ROAD FROM SANA TO SA'ADA WHERE LOCAL GARRISON HAD BEEN SHUT IN BY TRIBAL FORCES. IN ONE SKIRMISH ON THE WAY, ARMY PUSHED ASIDE ROADBLOCK OF TRIBAL FORCES UNDB ABDULLAH KAMIS AL-AWJARI, WHO AS PARA-MOUNT SHAYKH OF SAHAR TRIBE, IS DOMINATING FIGURE AROUND SA'ADA. AL-AWJARI IS ONE OF THREE TRIBAL FIGURES (OTHERS NAGI N ALI A) GHADIR AND QASSIM MUNASSER ARE NOW DEAD) WHO WERE SECRET

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KEY IN ROYALIST OPPOSITION TO THE REPUBLIC FROM 1962-1970. ABDULLAH IS MAN OF GREAT MARTIAL RECKLESSNESS WHO HAS NEVER ACCEPTED IDEA OF SGRONG CENTRAL GOVERNMENT. AL-AWJARI CONSIDERS HIMSELF INDEPENDENT FIGURE, SEPARATE EVEN FROM HASHID PARAMOUNT SHAYKH ABDALLAH BIN HUSSAIN AL-AHMAR.

2. AS BEST WE CAN DETERMIN, LOSSES IN ROADBLOCK CLASH ON

GOVERNMENT SIDE WERE LIGHT (17 QN) WITH LOSSES ON TRIBAL SIDE SCARCELY MORE. IT IS PROBABLE THAT STRONG SHOW OF FORCE BY GOVERNMENT AVERTED WIDER CLASH, AND IT STRIKES US AS SIGNIFICANT SAUDIS RELEASED VEHICLES UNDER THEIR CONTROL TO TRANS-PORT YAR TROOPS NORTH.

3. ROAD TO SA'ADA IS NOW APPARENTLY OPEN, AT LEAST TEMPORARILY, TO GOVERNMENT VEHICLES AS WELL AS TAXIS. IF THIS SITUATION PERSISTS, IT WILL BE REMARKABLE NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR CENTRAL GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS HAD IN THE PAST TO REGARD NORTHEAST AREA AND SA'ADA AS LARGELY BEYOND THEIR CONTROL AND EVEN ACCESS.

4. WHILE AL-HAMDI WAS PREPARING TO TAKE ON AL-AWJARI, HE WAS APPARENTLY MAKING CONCILIATORY MOVES TOWARDS ABDULLAH BIN HUSSAIN AL-AHMAR. USING AL-AHMAR'S BROTHER-IN-LQSW, MUJAHID ABU SHUWARIB, AL-HAMDI INVITED AL-AHMAR TO SANA AND PREPARED TO SEND GOVERNMENT MISSION TO KHAMAR AS TOKEN OF SAFE PASSAGE AND HONORABLE RECEPTION.

5. ACCORDING TO SALIH HUDDAYYN, SAUDI MILITARY ATTACHE, DICEY SITUATION REPORTED IN SANA 2807 WAS GREATLY EASED BY WORDS OF CAUTION AND SUPPORT FROM UNITED STATES AND SAUDIS. ACCORDING TO YAR CHIEF OF STAFF AL-GHASHMI, AL-HAMDI WAS IN "BAD WAY LOGICALLY" FOLLOWING HIS ORDER TO USE AIR STRIKES AGAINST

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TRIBESMEN. LARGE CONFRONTATION SEEMED TO PRESENT HIM WITH NO WIN SITUATION. AL-HAMDI KNEW HE COULD WIN MILITARY VICTORY BUT HE DOES NOT LIKE TO USE MILITARY FORCE BECAUSE OF POLITICAL AFTEREFFECTS. HOWEVER, CHALLENGED BY HIS OPPONENTS AND PRESSED BY HIS ARMY, HE WAS IN BLOODY-MINDED MOOD. SAUDIS AND US COUNSEL HELPED AL-HAMDI PULL BACK FROM BRINK WITH CONFIDENCE IN HIS GOOD JUDGEMENT AND LIKELY SUCCESS. SALIH TOLD AL-HAMDI THAT SAUDI GOVERNMENT STANDS FULLY BEHIND AL-HAMDI AND WHILE URGING CAUTION IN MILITARY ACTIVITIES, HOWEVER, GAVE HIM SUPPORT---LIGHT TRUCKS--- TO CARRY THROUGH LIMITED OPERATIONS WHICH HE NEEDED TO ESTABLISH UPPER HAND. SALIH ALSO CLAIMS US AMBASSADOR'S VISIT TO PRESIDENT HELPED TO DEFUSE SITUATION, HAD AL-HAMDI TO TAKE CONCILIATORY STEPS RATHER THAN SEEK MILITARY SITUATION.

6. SALIH CLAIMED THAT SOVIETS WERE PLAYING DOUBLE GAME BY MAKING MILITARY EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE TO YAR WHILE "TAKING EVERY ADVANTAGE" AND "VERY HAPPY" WITH ANY MILITARY CONFLICT BETWEEN AL-HAMDI AND TRIBES.

7. IN ANY CASE, WORKING FROM ALL SIDES NOW-- THE PRESIDENT, THE FOREIGN MINISTER, THE MINISTER OF STATE SAID, MINISTER

OF INTERIOR, CHIEF OF STAFF AND OTHERS-- IS THAT SITUATION HAS CALMED REMARKABLY AND PROSPECTS ARE IN SIGHT FOR FURTHER IMPROVEMENTS IN POLITICAL SITUATION. EXCEPTION TO THIS IS SINAN ABU LUHUM WHO, ACCORDING TO PRESIDENT AND OTHERS, IS BEHIND PRESENT TROUBLE AND UN- LIKELY TO BE WELCOMED BACK TO YARG EVEN IF HE OFFERS TO REPENT. ABU LUHUM MUST IN MEANTIME CONTEND WITH LARGE FORCE, PERHAPS BRIGADE SIZE, WHICH HAS MOVED INTO THREE AREAS OF NAHAM (ABU LUHUM'S HOME) AND ARHAB. THIS FORCE EFFECTIVELY REMOVES GOVERNMENT CONTROL TO END OF RECENTLY BUILT ROADS.

8. VVMMENT: AL-HAMDI'S TACTICS ARE CLEARLY WORKING, ALBEIT WITH SOME ANXIOUS AND GLOOMY MOMENTS FOR HIM. HE WANTS TO
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DO NOTHING TO PROVOKE TRIBES BUT WILL ANSWER WITH GREAT FORCE WHEN THEY HARRY ARMY TOO MUCH. AS AFTER YARG ATTACKS IN ARHAB LAST YEAR, AL-HAMDI FOLLOWED UP WITH POLITICAL GESTURES DESIGNED TO DIVIDE TRIBAL SHAYKHS AND WIN OVER SOME OF THEM. AT PRESENT TIME, AS AFTER ARHAB ATTACKS LAST YEAR, HE HAS EXPANDED AREA OF GOVERNMENT CONTROL AND DOMINATION. IF HE FOLLOWS TRUE TO FORM, HE WILL MOVE IN WITH SMALL PROJECTS AND OFFERS OF MUCH MORE AID TO WEAKEN HOLD OF SHAYKHS OVER THEIR CONSTITUENCIES. IN THIS SCENARIO MOMENTS ALWAYS ARISE WHEN CONFLICT THREATENS TO BECOME MORE MILITARY THAN POLITICAL. AL-HAMDI DOES NOT LIKE OR WANT TO USE FORCE BUT WILL STOP AT NOTHING IN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT IN COUNTRY WHICH HAS ALWAYS BEEN DEEPLY DIVIDED BY FRACTIOUS, REACTIONARY TRIBWP LEADERS. HE SEES NO OTHER WAY TO PRESS DEVELOPMENT AND LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR ORDERLY GOVERNMENT IN LAND WHERE HUMAN RIGHTS ARE NOW UNKNOWN AND FEUDAL MALDISTRIBUTION OF INCOME IS THE RULE.
SCOTES

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